

## **What is the Statewide Planning and Research, Part II, Program?**

The Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) Statewide Planning and Research (SPR), Part II, Program is authorized and funded through the Code of Federal Regulations, Title 23: Highways, PART 420 – PLANNING AND RESEARCH PROGRAM AND ADMINISTRATION, Subpart B – Research, Development and Technology Transfer Program Management. This program is administered through the Research Administration Section in the Bureau of Field Services.

The program funds projects that have been initiated to address a specific research need in MDOT. Funding eligibility is determined based on whether the project scope qualifies as research. Traditional construction projects, planning activities and data collection efforts necessary for day to day business needs do not qualify for SPR, Part II funding.

SPR, Part II funding can be used to research and evaluate new technologies that relate to design, construction, maintenance and operation of all transportation modes. Other eligible uses include technology transfer and certain training activities.

Research Administration issues a call for research ideas in October and November of every odd year. These research ideas are reviewed, prioritized, and strategic selections are made based upon the strategic research priorities determined by the Research Executive Committee (REC).

Five Research Advisory Committees (RAC), which advise the REC, evaluate and rank each idea. The REC makes the final determination on what ideas will be further explored at the Research Development Meetings. Members of the research community gather at the MDOT Research Development Meetings – held biennially in the spring of even years, to provide experience and knowledge into the selected research ideas. Through working group sessions, facilitated by MDOT staff, key categories are addressed, such as Project Background, Project Plan, and Implementation. Within each category, attendees are asked to determine such things as key issues, potential risks of the research, and appropriate deliverables. Researchers from Michigan universities and private consulting firms, as well as MDOT technical and executive staff, attend the working group sessions.

The outcomes of the working group sessions assist MDOT Project Managers in drafting a high quality problem statement. The problem statement is used to issue a Request for Proposals (RFP). The RFP solicitation results in the selection of a consultant or university research team that will research the problem, supply recommendations and conclusions and recommend an implementation plan as part of the research project deliverables.